VISIT…

NEXTLEVEL

BELGIAN GRAFFITI MAGAZINE

Vol. IV

1 ME - DB 2 Moh 3 PR 4 Ollo 5 VM 6 Again 7 Zen 8 Tobin 9 Cops Die Slow 10 Tirer 11 Big fat 'Lens'

NEXTLEVEL

Intro Issue4

We're not going to salivate that we're late because you already know that but we plan to come out more regularly now.
We can say some things has changed in the Belgian graffiti since last issue, now as you can see some writers became so popular these days that they even have their own fan club. An other strange discovery is that for some subs you even don't have to go underground any more...
Greets to all who has send photo's and special to C. Gomez and James

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Interview

You can't deny it, since a few years, it's popping up everywhere in the streets. The question has been raised : Is this phenomenon an art form, some trendy medium for personal advertising or a modern way of vandalism ? We asked Mack Plakt, well known in Belgium for his contribution to this growing up discipline, about his vision...

NL => What motivates you?
The stimulus that other people have to do what they do is very motivating, so I try to be as equally driven to do stuff. It's all very exciting: the positive and negative reactions you get from people who experience your art, new doors that open and put you into different and new circumstances.

Nl => Why and/or how did you start sticking instead of using a can?
I couldn't live with the macho mentality within the scene. All the backstabbing and the kings versus toys stuff, it just wasn't my thing. Sticking was one of the alternatives: suddenly I could bring my work to the streets without having to bother about what other people would think about it, because almost nobody cared back then.

NL => Does the so called "Street art" make part of the Graffiti movement ? Please give some reasons whatever the answer is, yes or no... If yes, do you feel like Street art is a branch of the Graffiti tree (it's king of an image)? I mean, does it come from the original graffiti? Or is it more of a mix between advertising and tagging? If no, if you feel like it has nothing to do with it, can you tell us where it comes from?
To me, it's a part of it in any way. I started doing street art to be active in the streets, I wanted to see how my art would work in the streetscape: messing up one image until it becomes an icon, just like a tag. I didn't have a purpose except for keeping myself busy, being addicted to sticking and to the effect of seeing your stuff all over the streets after a night of sticking and pasting. But accidentally, because of all this, I've been starting to get some design -wise commissions and the whole thing has started to become a kind of promotion thing for my work. It's too bad that not all street artists come from the same background, some even don't know anything about graffiti. They think of sticking as a cheap means to promote their "style" of work and to get jobs and so on. Most of the time, these are the same people that quit sticking right away, because they're not motivated enough. So I could conclude by saying that street art is a part of the graffiti movement, but i t's also a way of plain alternative advertisement.

NL => Talking about fashion, last year, everybody was trying trains because it was The thing, nowadays, more and more guys are trying stickers, stencils and posters... Do you think it's just kind of an evolution of Graffiti or more a fashion thing to be up to date (and famous)?
I certainly hope that people don't start doing street art because they think it's hip and their only statement is to do

what's The thing. I just think that a lot of people haven't thought about this option of outing yourself. By seeing all these examples in the streets and in mags, they come to realize it's a fun thing to do and a new medium, not just something "woossies" do because they're too chicken to paint.

NL => What inspires you in your work, in life? Why?
Anatomic deformation, the noise and interference in images, visible failures in people and objects. It's probably because I've been having these neurotic habits from when I was a little kid, which are in a way also failures in my way of thinking, that I have an affection for these kinds of defects. I also feel a certain liking for black and white, xerox style printing techniques that have visible failures.

NL => Describe 24 hours of the life of a Street artist (in this case, yourself!):
Lots of copying and printing at the xerox machine and computer printer, spending days and days silkscreening my posters and stickers, and spending even more time at cutting them. Trying to get the dried-up wheatpaste off my arms, having blasters on my fingers from sticking so many stickers, from pulling the back off them. And last but not least, dragging my bucket of wheatpaste, brushes and posters around town, while I have noone to help me out.

NL => Why do you think Street art is more recognized as an art than normal graffiti?
You see more street artists presenting stuff in art galleries than normal writers...
I would never say street art is more art than graffiti, or even that street art IS art. It's just that it leans more to the graphic/illustrative side of art and because of that, it's more acceptable to the public, and more exposable. People don't link street art to vandalism as much as they do graffiti, don't ask me why. The reason more street artists are showing their work in galleries that normal writers, is because it's more in their line of thinking to get their work "off the streets" again

NL => According to your preferences, which artists are really a step forward in Street art?
Judging by quantity, I just love the work of 6 (Sex). During a tour through Berlin I walked into his work everywhere. He paints stuff all over town with white latex: internet links to personal websites, smilies, 6'es, he even paints on the inside of trash cans! 6 also has a little street art gallery near Rosenthaler Platz.
Judging by quality, I mean, people who spend a lot of time making their stuff by hand, I would say Swoon from Toyshop Collective. She makes her posters and cuts out bits and pieces so that the texture and colour of the wall under her posters come through. Also, Faile have created a lot of outstanding work.
And to name the person who laid the foundations for the whole street art scene, of course I'm going to say Shepard "Obey Giant" Fairey.

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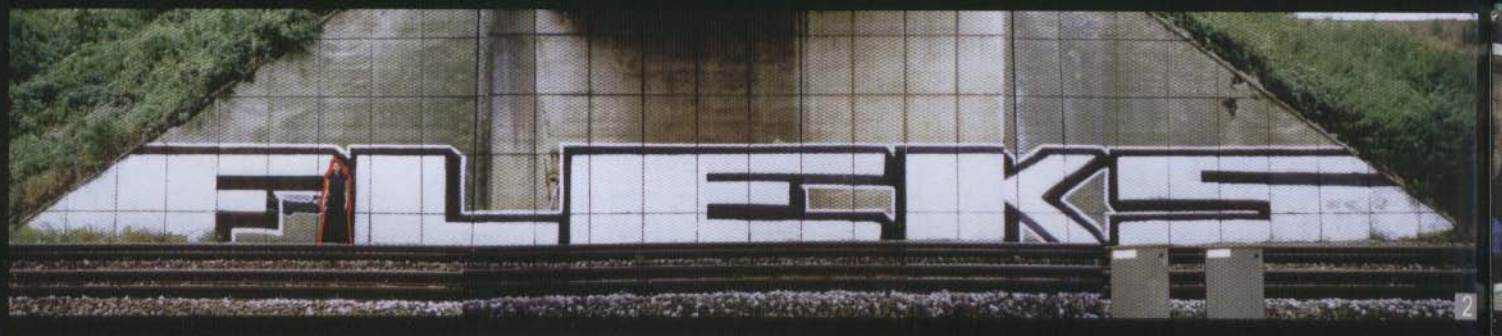

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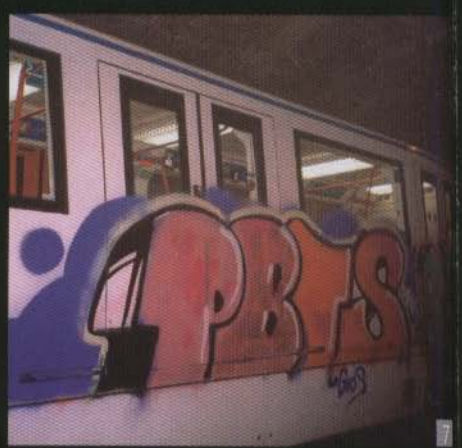

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He has a huge amount of running panels all over our small country. He doesn't care about fame and prefers painting than talking about it plus he has an original style, reason enough for us to ask him a few questions:

NL=> When, how and why did you start?
I started in 1996 on my own. I was actually looking for spots for a friend but he never painted them, so I decided to do them on my own.

NL=> Who were you influences back than?
Dekor (king, ever since and he still is) Asem, Ansi and Shok.

NL=> Can you tell us what kind of graffiti writer you are?
All around, I definitely like doing walls when they are big but I prefer trains.

NL=> Why trains, what's so special about steel?
In the beginning I wanted to paint each Belgian train type once, but we have so many types of trains and some were never parked in the yards I visited, so I just kept on going to the normal places and hitting the available train models.

NL=> Nowadays, everybody wants to hit subways and trains in other countries what's your opinion on this and what about foreign scene's copairing to ours?
I always like to paint in other places, be in different situations but I don't see myself as a subway writer or interrailer but it is always nice adding another train type.

NL=> What kind of action satisfies you most?
Going from a 2 minutes back jump to a full colour whole car as long as it's finished and I'm satisfied it's all good. Not that kind of paranoid situations in which when I'm done I can't even remember what my piece looks like but I still remember which lights were on and which doors were open.

NL=> Coolest action so far?
(After some thinking...)That would be three years ago, we did some colour panels over the windows and two whole cars in three different places. The Dynamic duo on the tracks!

NL=> What do you think of the Belgian train scene, compare to other countries?
I don't know the real situation abroad, so I can't tell. About Belgium, there are some guys with style but it looks like most of them are more interested in stories and gossips. I don't care about rumours I just do my thing. Kids and the younger generation don't have respect and don't know anything about all what happened in the past. I feel like you should know about history and who helped Graffiti to grow up back in the days.

NL=> Which object would you paint if you could choose?
A Mono rail

NL=> How do you consider the future of graffiti?
Totally out of control

NL=> What's your motivation and goal?
Motivation: pure addiction and my goal is so to let all people see the stupid little drawings that I'm making at home:-)

NL=> Nobody can deny it, you have a lot of panels running these days what do you think is most important: Quality or Quantity?
I'm more for the quality but the internal rush encourage for more and more.

NL=>You have an original style, how can you describe it?
...Craziness? That's how I see letters in my head.

NL=> What's your favourite type of train anyway?
Anything that rolls for a long time but the old cherry's have something extra warm.

NL=> Anything to add?
(Making some strange noises) PUC, SAC, Bluph, Shok, Bond, Oill, Roncha, Oscar, Janeen clique, Rosum, the old BSC and next level magazine for taking this interview.

PIC
SAC

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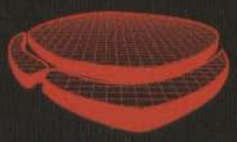
ART CONCEPT



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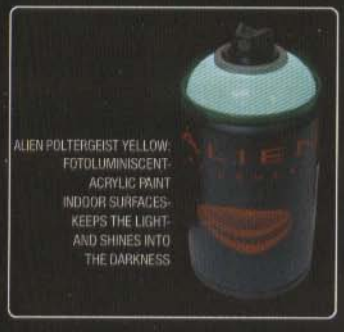

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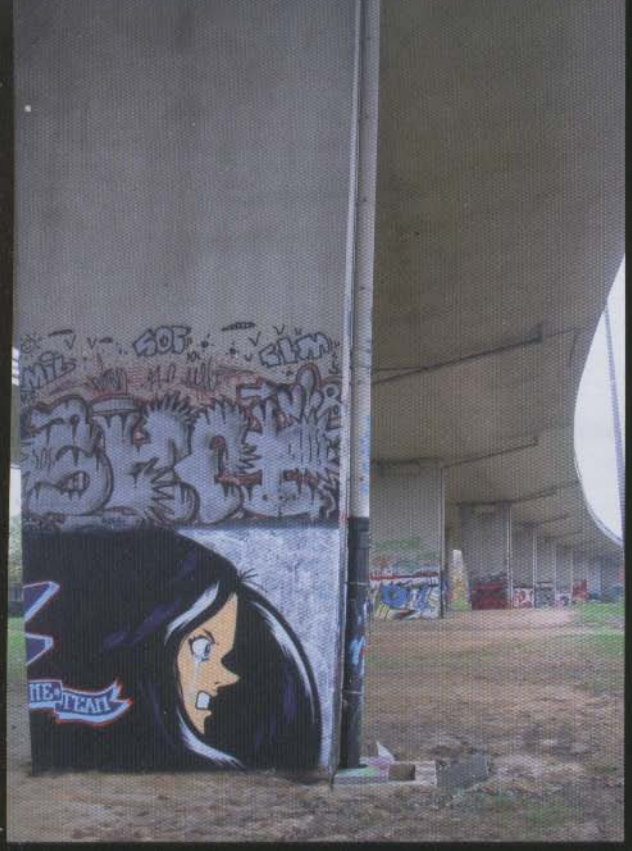

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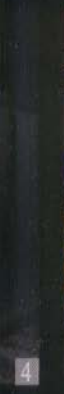

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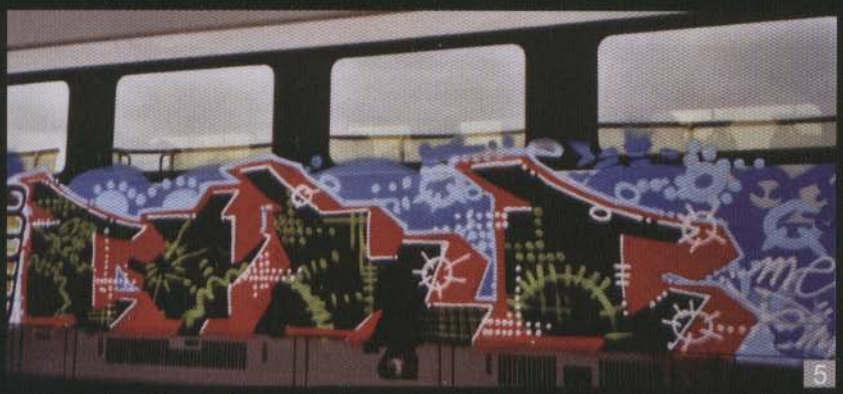

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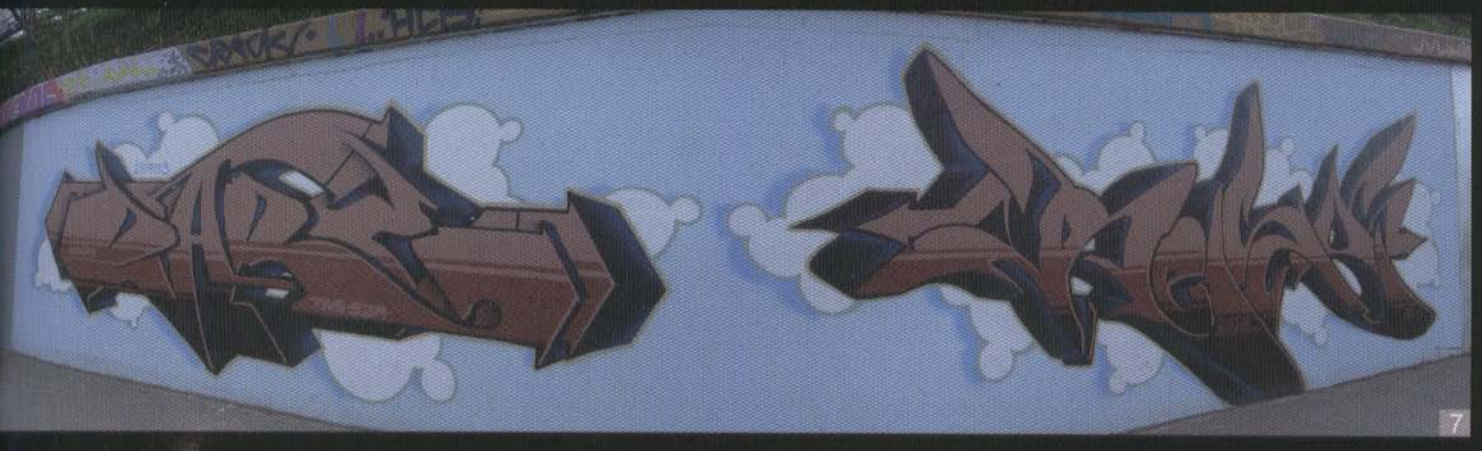
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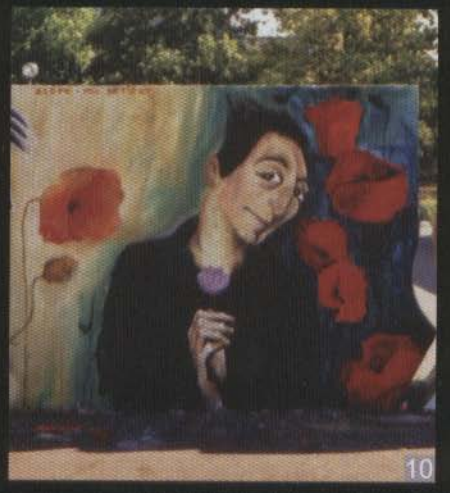
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